

## (12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property  
Organization  
International Bureau



(43) International Publication Date  
26 May 2005 (26.05.2005)

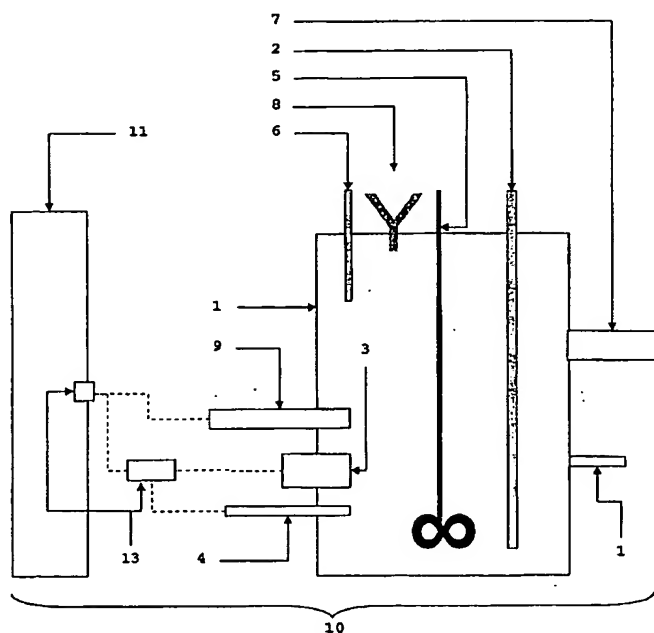
PCT

(10) International Publication Number  
**WO 2005/047488 A1**

- (51) International Patent Classification<sup>7</sup>: C12N 1/00, 1/20, 1/26, 1/38
- (21) International Application Number: PCT/AU2004/001577
- (22) International Filing Date: 15 November 2004 (15.11.2004)
- (25) Filing Language: English
- (26) Publication Language: English
- (30) Priority Data: 2003906290 14 November 2003 (14.11.2003) AU
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- (81) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM,

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(54) Title: SELECTIVE ENRICHMENT OF MICROORGANISMS FOR DESIRED METABOLIC PROPERTIES



(57) Abstract: A method for selectively enriching for a microorganism able to metabolise a test substrate, and/or the enrichment of an enzyme involved in the metabolism of the test substrate, the method comprising the steps of: a) providing a population of microorganisms in a vessel, b) feeding fluid into the vessel at a controlled flow rate commencing with an initial flow rate, the fluid comprising a nutrient medium and, for at least part of the feed period, the test substrate, c) producing a signal indicative of the level of a metabolism indicator over the time-frame of the enrichment, and d) providing an output based on the signal to enable assessment of selective enrichment of a microorganism that metabolises the test substrate, and/or the enrichment of an enzyme produced by the microorganism that is involved in the metabolism of the test substrate. To accelerate the enrichment process, conditions may be set to increase the flow rate in stages as a steady state is detected. This may be achieved by presetting conditions to be met by the signal output to result in a change in the fluid flow rate, and changing the flow rate at which fluid is fed into the vessel when the conditions are met, wherein the preset conditions are a combination of a predetermined period of time and a preset value range within which the signal must remain for the predetermined period of time.

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TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

SI, SK, TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

(84) Designated States (unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, NA, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IS, IT, LU, MC, NL, PL, PT, RO, SE,

**Published:**

— with international search report

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